

ALIEN VISITORS TO ANCIENT CHINA?

High in the mountains of Bayan Kara Ula, on the borders of China and Tibet, a team of archaeologists were conducting a very detailed routine survey of a series of interlinked caves.

Their interests had been excited by the discovery of lines of neatly arranged graves which contained the skeletons of what must have been a strange race of human beings; strange because they had unnaturally

spindly bodies and large, overdeveloped heads.

At first, it had been thought that the caves had been the home of an hitherto unknown species of ape. But as the leader of the team—the Chinese archaeologist, Professor Chi Pu Tei—pointed out, "Who ever heard of apes burying each other?"

It was while studying the skeletons that one of the team stumbled on a large, round stone disc, half buried in the dust on the floor of the cave.

The team gathered round the discovery, turning it this way and that. It looked, absurdly, like a kind of Stone Age gramophone record. There was a hole in the centre and a fine, spiral groove radiated to the rim.

Closer inspection, however, showed that the groove was, in fact, a continuous spiralling line of closely written characters.

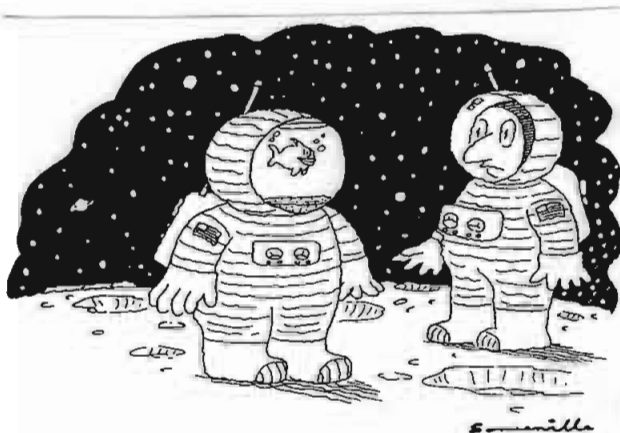
The object was a 'record', in more ways than one. Only nobody at the time—the year was 1938—possessed the key to its incredible message.

The disc was labelled and filed away among other finds in the area. Even those who knew of its existence knew nothing of its meaning.

Many experts tried to translate the microglyphs in the 20 years the disc languished in Beijing. They all failed. It was not until another professor—Dr Tsum Um Nui—broke the code and started to decipher the 'speaking grooves' that the extraordinary implications of the disc were realised. Realised, that is, by only a select few. The outside world remained in ignorance. For the professor's conclusions on the meaning of the disc were so shattering that they were officially suppressed. The Peking Academy of Prehistory forbade him to publish his findings.

Two years later, in 1965, the professor and four of his colleagues were finally given permission to reveal their theory. It appeared under the long-winded but intriguing title, "The Grooved Script concerning Spaceships which, as recorded on the Discs, landed on Earth 12,000 years ago".

The 'records'—716 of the grooved discs were later uncovered in the same caves—told an astonishing story of a 'space probe' by the inhabitants of another planet which came to grief in the Bayan Kara Ula mountain range. The strange, spiral script told



THE TWILIGHT ZONE

how the peaceful intentions of the 'aliens' had been misunderstood and how many of them were hunted down and killed by members of the Ham tribe, who lived in the neighbouring caves.

According to Dr Tsum Um Nui, one of the lines of the hieroglyphs read, "The Dropas came down from the clouds in their aircraft. Our men, women and children hid in the caves ten times before sunrise. When at last they understood the sign language of the Dropas, they realised that the newcomers had peaceful intentions..."

Another section expressed 'regret' by the Ham tribe that the aliens' spaceship had crash-landed in such remote and inaccessible mountains and that there had been no way of building a new one to enable Dropas to return to their own planet.

In the years since the discovery of the first disc, archaeologists and anthropologists had learned more about the isolated Bayan Kara Ula area. And much of the information seemed to corroborate the bizarre story recorded on the discs.

Legend still preserved in the area spoke of small, gaunt, yellow-faced men who 'came from the clouds, long, long ago'. The men had huge, bulging heads and puny bodies and were so ugly and repellent that they were hounded down by local tribesmen on horseback. Strangely, the description of the 'invaders' tallied with the skeletons originally discovered in the caves by Professor Chi Pu Tei.

On the walls of the caves themselves archaeologists had uncovered crude pictures of the rising Sun, the Moon, unidentifiable stars and the Earth, all joined together by lines of pea-sized dots. Along with the discs, the cave drawings had been dated around 12,000 years old.

The cave area was still inhabited by two semi-troglodyte tribes known as the Hams and the Dropas, themselves extremely odd in appearance. The frail and stunted tribesmen averaged only about five feet in height and were neither typically Chinese nor Tibetan. "Their racial background," said one expert, "is a mystery."

But even with the publication of Professor Tsum Um Nui's amazing translation, the story of the 'space discs' was not over. Russian scientists asked to see the discs and several were sent to Moscow for examination.

They were scraped free of rock particles which had stuck to them and then put through chemical analysis. To the surprise of the scientists, they were found to contain large amounts of cobalt and other metallic substances. That was not all. When placed on a special turntable—according to Dr Vyatcheslav Saizev, who described the experiments in the Soviet magazine *Sputnik*—they vibrated or 'hummed' in an unusual rhythm as though an electric charge was passing through them. Or as one scientist suggested, "as if they formed some part of an electrical circuit". At some time they had clearly been exposed to extraordinarily high voltages.

Did the discs actually record an abortive space mission by alien astronauts 12,000 years ago? Nearly all the leading 'space speculators'—theorists like Erich von Daniken and Peter Kolosimo—believe so. For once one accepts the proposition that aliens may already have visited Earth, then it follows that some of their space probes must have failed and the astronauts must have been destroyed.

THE RAINMAKER

Nothing much distinguished the 39-year-old man who stood before the San Diego City Council on 13 December 1915—except his occupation. Although he modestly preferred to call himself a "moisture accelerator", Charles Mallory Hatfield always would be known as "The Rainmaker".

The Minnesota-born pluviculturist had been "persuading moisture to come down" in thirsty southern California since 1902 when he perfected his technique on his father's ranch near Bonsall. His credentials were impressive. In 1904 he raised the level of the Lake Hemet Land and Water Company's reservoir by 22 feet and he collected \$1,000 from the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce for producing 18 inches of rain during the first four months of 1905. He travelled to the Klondike the following year to fill the streams around Dawson City so the miners could pan for gold. And the farmers in California's San Joaquin Valley were so impressed with his work that he was invited to return for eight successive years.

However, only the urging of the Wide Awake Improvement Club had induced the sceptical San Diego councilmen to request Hatfield's professional services. The city's population had doubled in four years, and an adequate water supply was necessary for continued growth. While the year's total rainfall had been average, it had been too intermittent to replenish the depleted reservoirs. The new 13 billion-gallon Morena Reservoir had never been more than half full, and on 10 December it held a scant 5 billion gallons of water. For \$10,000 Hatfield promised he would fill this reservoir to overflowing before the end of 1916, and agreed that if he failed the city would owe him nothing.

Hatfield immediately set out for the Morena Reservoir, located 60 miles east of San Diego in the lower elevations of the Laguna Mountains where, with the assistance of his brother Paul, he built a "rain attraction and precipitation plant"—a 24-ft wooden tower topped with a fenced 12-ft-square platform to hold the vats from which his secret chemicals were dissipated into the atmosphere. Three dry days passed, but 1.02 inches of rain fell on 30 December. Using a formula that was "300% stronger...than ever before", the Hatfields worked around the clock. There were only a few showers during the next two weeks, but then a six-day storm that began on 14 January delivered 4.23 inches of rain to San Diego. "Downpour lays mantle of wealth on San Diego" and



"County rain records smashed" read the headlines. By the time The Rainmaker telephoned city hall on 17th, 12.73 inches of rain had fallen at Morena. With a "loud, clear and confident" voice he explained, "Within the next few days I expect to make it rain right. Just hold your horses until I show you a real rain."

The sky cleared on 20 January, but another six-day storm rolled in four days later and brought 2.85 inches of rain to add to "Hatfield's hatful". Since the ground was still saturated from the previous rains, disaster was inevitable. The San Diego River jumped its banks and several houses floated out into San Diego Bay. Police in rowboats rescued stranded home owners and motorists, and one man, wiping the water from his eyes as he was hauled on board, suggested, "Let's pay Hatfield \$100,000 to stop." Ironically, the rain cut off the city's water supply, forcing people to seek out water holes. A variety of animals, including hundreds of snakes, appeared in the city's streets. The coastal highway to Los Angeles was impassable, boats were swept from their moorings in the bay, telegraph and telephone lines were felled, rail service to the area was discontinued because stretches of track had vanished, and 110 of the county's 112 bridges were washed away. Except for the arrival of an occasional relief steamer loaded with food, the city was completely isolated for a week.

Winds blowing up to 62 mph were clocked on the morning of the 26th, and the north abutment of the Sweetwater Dam collapsed 24 hours later. On the evening of the 27th, the Lower Otay Dam burst "like the crack of doom", releasing 13 billion gallons of water. A 50-ft wall of water

drowned approximately 20 people and scoured the Otay Valley on its 7-mile journey to the San Diego Bay.

At Morena the Hatfields were oblivious to the destruction the rain had wreaked upon the rest of the county. When a band of farmers gathered at the base of their tower and yelled up at them to stop the rain, the brothers thought they were joking and continued their efforts to fill the reservoir. Charles explained, "I had a year to do the job, but I thought I'd might as well wind it up right away." By the end of January, 44 inches of rain had fallen at Morena, and the water flowing over the top of the dam was 4 feet deep. Only when the brothers started into San Diego to claim their fee did they realise the magnitude of the storm damages. Since the road was gone, they had to walk and they posed as the "Benson boys" to avoid being lynched by angry ranchers.

When Hatfield arrived in the city after four days of hiking, the city council refused to pay him. The Rainmaker had been so eager to start to work that he had left San Diego before the contract was signed. When he threatened to sue the city for his fee, the council agreed to pay him only if he would assume responsibility for the \$3.5 million in damage suits that had been filed against the city for hiring a rainmaker. (The rains were later judged to be "an act of God, not of Hatfield", and the city settled for 5 cents on the dollar.) Hatfield was philosophical about the loss and said, "It was worth the publicity, anyhow."

The Rainmaker's reputation spread around the world after his feat in San Diego. In 1922 he was called to Naples by the Italian government to end a drought, and his last contract took him in 1930 to

Honduras, where he doused a raging forest fire in 10 days and produced a total of 15 inches of rain in two months.

David Hatfield, Paul's son, claimed the brothers' greatest achievement occurred in 1922 on the California desert in unpopulated Sand Canyon, when they decided to "shoot the works". They hauled in barrels of chemicals, set up a tower and waited two days for the rain. "It rained for about a day, but in one hour the weather bureau recorded 250 inches of rain," David reported. (The current *Guinness* record is 73.62 inches in 24 hours.) The canyon was destroyed, the Southern Pacific tracks were washed out for 30 miles, and a man living 20 miles away was "running for his very life".

After 503 successful rainmaking attempts, Charles retired from the business and settled in Eagle Rock, a suburb of Los Angeles, where he sold sewing machines. Although rain aggravated his varicose veins in his later years, he was ready to return to San Diego to fill the reservoirs once again. In 1956 the 81-year-old Hatfield attended the Hollywood premiere of *The Rainmaker*, a film that had been inspired by his career.

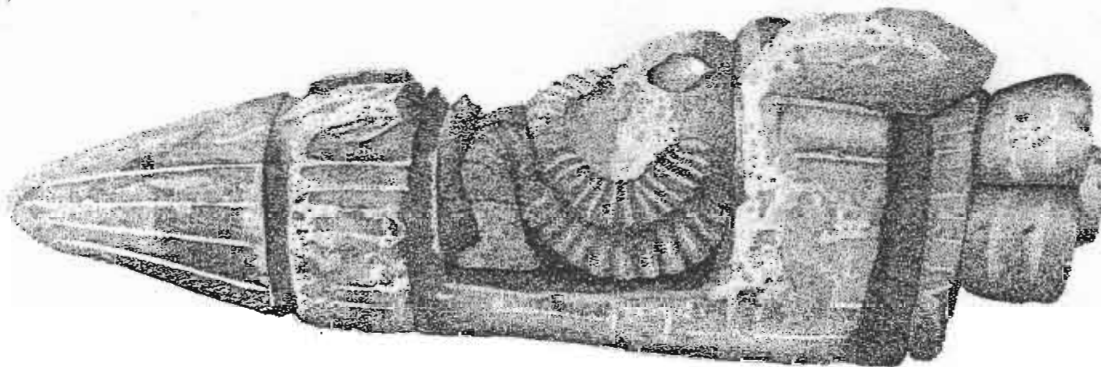
The Hatfields were offered large sums for their rainmaking process on several occasions. After Sand Canyon, Charles and Paul decided their formula was "too devastating a force to unleash to any one individual or to a group of bureaucrats who might misuse it," David reported. "They looked around and they saw very few people of integrity, men who stood by their words at all costs, and they said, 'Well, the secret will die with us.' And that's what happened."

(Source: *Stranger Than Fiction*)

ANCIENT SPACESHIP?

This object was excavated in the town of Toprakkale (known in ancient times as Tuspa). It is 22 cm long, 7.5 cm wide and 8 cm high, with an estimated age of 3,000 years. To the modern eye it appears to represent a space vehicle for one, with the pilot's head missing. Some scientists have cast doubt on its age. It is kept in the Museum of Archaeology in Istanbul but not exhibited.

(Source: *Bilim Meyen*, vol. 3, *Fortean Times* #71, 1993)



THE TWILIGHT ZONE

MORE MYSTERIOUS CAVES

H. F. Forrest kept the town of Chehalis buzzing for two weeks near the turn of the century with an incredible story about a huge cave on the south side of Chehalis.

His story was so unbelievable that almost everyone believed it, feeling Forrest could not possibly have made it up. Although some townspeople waited for him to try to make money off the tale, he left town mysteriously two weeks after he arrived, never getting any of the Chehalis' money. Nor did he ask any.

He received front page attention two straight weeks in the *Chehalis Bee-Nuggett*, the editor of the newspaper so caught up in the story that when The Oregonian, having read the first week's fantastic account, published an article casting doubt upon Forrest's observations, the *Bee-Nuggett* chided *The Oregonian* for having no trust.

On 10 March 1901, 75 years ago today, Forrest spoke to the "children at the reform school".

He said he had been prospecting when he came upon a large flat rock "which had been hewn by human hands". He removed it to find the cave entrance on the south side of Mt Rainier.

He entered to find huge caves and a mine of vast wealth. The cave was reported to be 12 feet high and eight to 60 feet wide.

The walls were "polished", and contained "hieroglyphics and figures made by human hands".

He explored the main passage five miles deep. Side passages contained ice caves, and other side passages contained boiling water, according to his tale. He said that at one place a sulphur spring, a hot water

spring and a cold water spring came up side by side, and human-size tubs had been carved into the rock floor for bathing in these various waters.

Forrest said he then came upon an immense underground lake. Where the main passage came to the lake, a large canoe was chained with silver links to the wall. Removing the canoe, he explored the lake for a mile and a half in each direction without reaching the shore.

He came upon a row of vaults in a side passage. One of the vault lids was slightly askew, and Forrest went in to investigate.

He discovered the bodies of two people, a woman who he said was seven feet tall, and a man, who Forrest claimed was 7-10 feet tall. Both were laid out on slabs of ice, and were perfectly preserved in a completely frozen state. They wore gold jewellery with engravings of antelope and other characters.

Near the bodies were the dismembered remains of two children. Other bones were scattered around the vault, according to Forrest.

Forrest reported tremendous amounts of white gold-bearing quartz and copper in the huge caves.

Forrest disappeared 16th March, leaving his outfit at the hotel. He was not mentioned again in the *Chehalis Bee-Nuggett*.

Forrest's caves have been elusive as well. They have never been rediscovered. But there are famous ice caves, near Paradise Point State Park on the south side of Mt Rainier. The ice caves are huge, and fantastic to see, but have few of the special features Forrest described to his enthralled Chehalis audience.

(Source: *The Daily Chronicle, Centralia, Washington, 10 March 1976*)

THE MUTANT MICE OF TURKEY

An intriguing item from Turkey has it that residents of Göçkün, Doyran and Yenice villages near the town of Alaçam in Samsun province, have mounted round-the-clock armed watches because of attacks by giant white mice.

The vicious vermin have webbed hind legs and weigh in at 4-6 kg apiece. They first turned up around two years ago and their numbers have increased steadily ever since. They've been attacking and eating 10-20 village chickens every day, and have even attacked cats and dogs—though local domestic pet numbers have dwindled to nil since they've now all run away.

A villager, Mr Behram Pekgöz, was reportedly attacked and bitten by one of the rodents. These monster mice have eluded capture so far, despite poisoned food being laid.

(Source: *Hürriyet, 6 April 1993; Fortean Times #71, 1993*)

FOR SALE—HAUNTED HOUSE!

The slump in the European property market has meant that some estate agents have taken ingenuity to new dimensions to beat the recession. The latest selling point? Ghosts. A friendly one can sometimes make a property more attractive and even add value to the house—but a house with 'bad vibes' is often difficult to sell.

A Jacobean manor house, Boys Hall, in Kent, south-east England, with a £650,000 (US\$975,000) price tag, has as its key selling point the ghost of a young woman said to walk through the house on a certain night of the year.

Since April 1993 the UK Properties Misdescriptions Act has been in place, requiring estate agents to comply with strict guidelines for describing house particulars. It is unclear, however, whether agents are now legally bound to disclose information about ghostly residents—presuming they have been informed by the vendors.

Mr Tom Perrot, a former chairman of the Ghost Club and author of several books on haunted houses, has warned estate agents to be careful about what they say. "If a house is described as haunted without its owner's consent, he or she could sue for slander of goods," he said, because the description could reduce the house's value.

(Source: *The European, 17-23 December 1993*)

